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ABSTRACT

To provide the administration with a better sense of direction regarding the ongoing development of the college's alumni organization, a mail survey was conducted of a random sample of 200 McCook Community College (MCC), Nebraska, alumni. After a series of follow-up telephone calls, usable surveys were obtained for 65.5% of the sample (N=131). Study findings included the following: (1) 66.4% of the alumni favored the creation of a formal alumni organization; (2) 19.5% rated the alumni newsletter as excellent, 66.7% as good, and 10.3% as average; (3) 70.2% favored having an annual social event; (4) asked about their interest in various social activities, 74.1% of the respondents were in favor of reunions, 71.8% were interested in an alumni night with college events, 49.6% favored travel/tours, 47.3% supported alumni awards, 41.2% were interested in a Phi-Theta Kappa alumni gathering, and 19.1% were interested in an alumni band; (5) over 50% of the alumni were willing to encourage potential students to attend MCC (81.7%), fund an alumni scholarship (61.7%), and serve as career day resource people (51.9%); and (6) over 65% of the respondents favored alumni benefits such as library services (72.5%), receiving copies of the school newspaper (70.2%), special alumni rates for college events (69.5%), and use of the computer lab when available (65.7%). Recommendations based on study findings included dissemination of study results to alumni and administrators, formation of a steering committee to guide the development of a formal alumni organization, and continuation of the alumni newsletter as a major communication device. A literature review on two-year college efforts to implement alumni associations, a bibliography, and the survey instrument and cover letter are included. (GFW)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE MCCOOK COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALUMNI GROUP

Emergence of Higher Education in America Seminar

by

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A Practicum Report presented to Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

November, 1990

Abstract of a Practicum Report Presented to Nova University in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE MCCOOK COMMUNITY COLLEGE ALUMNI GROUP

by

Ford M. Craig

November, 1990

The purpose of this study was to assess the need for further development of the McCook Community College (MCC) alumni group. The problem which prompted this study was that administrators needed a better sense of direction regarding the ongoing development of the alumni organization. Preliminary steps toward an alumni organization had been taken, but valuable input from alumni was needed, and no such survey had been done. Thus, the research question concerned how the MCC alumni organization should be further developed.

Several procedures were involved in the assessment. A survey instrument with four general questions and three categorical areas was developed. The instrument was validated and administered to a random sample of 200 MCC alumni. Results were analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics and were reported in narrative and tabular format.

Findings, based on a 65.5 percent response rate, were used to derive these conclusions: 1) alumni favored the creation of a formal alumni organization; 2) alumni favored having at least one annual social event; and 3) alumni were very satisfied with the newsletter. Furthermore, alumni responded favorably to the possible creation of an alumni night, group tours, and reunions. They were willing to help with encouraging potential students, funding an alumni scholarship, and serving as career day resource people. Alumni also expressed interest in designated fringe benefits.

Recommendations included dissemination of the practicum information to alumni, appropriate administrators, and directors. A further recommendation was to establish a steering committee to use other recommendations developed as a result of this practicum to guide the development of a formal alumni organization. It was also recommended that the MCC alumni newsletter be continued.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

At McCook Community College (MCC), the first steps toward an alumni organization had been taken. MCC is a rural Nebraska college founded in 1926 that traditionally has had small graduating classes (under two hundred). A data base of alumni names was being assembled, with two thousand alumni names and addresses being completed and more still to be verified. Based on the addresses available, a first alumni newsletter had been mailed. However, while much had been accomplished, administrators needed a better sense of direction regarding ongoing development of the alumni organization.

Since no survey of alumni opinions relating to the direction of the alumni organization had been made, the need for assessment was of special significance to the administrators guiding and developing the alumni group. Also, because of the college president's desire to enhance public relations, he was highly supportive of alumni affairs and of the need for seeking opinions from alumni. Thus, because there was a mailing list of over two thousand names available, and an interested, supportive administration, the study appeared appropriate and feasible.

The purpose of this practicum, therefore, was to assess the need for further development of the MCC alumni group. A careful literature review was conducted to determine how other two-year institutions had organized and implemented alumni associations. The literature review also provided a conceptual framework necessary to create the alumni questionnaire. When completed, results of the assessment were used to make recommendations regarding appropriate courses of action for the further development of the MCC alumni group.

This practicum is related to topics examined in the Emergence of Higher Education in America Seminar. A section of the study guide for this class dealt with the future of and new directions for community colleges. In this part of the guide, Bryant and others (1990:136-137) comment on the work of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges which emphasized relationships between two-year colleges and their communities and service areas. An alumni association does provide one type of linkage to the local community and service area; therefore, this is an appropriate practicum.

Research Question

There was one research question central to this practicum. The question was as follows: How should the McCook Community College alumni organization be further developed?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review was conducted to determine the state of alumni affairs in other two-year colleges and how those colleges have responded to alumni needs. "Alumni associations," "graduate surveys," "alumni," "community colleges," "junior colleges," and "two-year colleges" were identifiers used to locate material in an ERIC search. Also, periodical articles were secured through the help of the MCC library staff. This literature, thus examined, contained information about the recent development of alumni affairs in community colleges, the functions being performed by alumni staff and officers, and the characteristics of effective alumni systems.

Some alumni association activity in two-year colleges was indicated in the literature; however, such activity was limited to about the last fifteen years. A limited amount of literature was available, and this fact is noted by Kerns (1986:1) in her comments about historical background:

> Because there is little literature available about the subject of alumni programs at two-year colleges, I cannot tell you when the first alumni program was begun at a two-year college.

However, even though not much of a historical perspective could be established, a number of writers indicate that two-year college alumni groups were in the process of being formed within the past ten years. A staff writer for the

ERIC Clearinghouse for Community and Junior Colleges (1984:2) says, "As community colleges become older, and their graduates more numerous, alumni associations are taking on larger roles in institutional support."

Bender (1988:1), in a more recent survey of 422 American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) affiliated institutions, comments, "It is clear that many, many colleges have recently established alumni programs, and that many more colleges plan to develop them soon." Kerns, (1986:2-3) who earlier noted the lack of any documented history, does mention efforts at the time of her article to establish two-year college alumni groups in North Carolina, California, and South Carolina.

Thus, the writers reviewed have generally indicated that two-year college alumni organizations have not had a long history, and those in existence were of recent origin. Kerns (1986:3) provides some possible reasons why such organizations are recent creations. She suggests that many community colleges are relatively new and have not had graduates in the work-a-day world for very long, alumni who transfer may be more supportive of the four-year receiving institutions, and finally, that community colleges (until recently) just have not made any commitment to alumni development.

A number of writers comment on reasons for beginning an alumni group in a two-year college. From these reasons, a number of specific alumni group functions could easily be

derived. In an early but often quoted study, McCracken and others (1980:4-5) suggest that an alumni group can help maintain updated files on former students and can provide scholarships to incoming students. Indeed, community colleges have encountered increased demands with regard to "tracking" students after they leave the institution, and thus, the alumni organization along with the student services personnel could combine efforts in this regard. Bender and others (1988:2) list other possible reasons for creating such a group and present them in order of priority: first, to promote public relations; second, to help with fund raising, and finally, to provide a pool of volunteers when needed.

Continuing on, Kerns (1988:4) adds the notion that alumni can serve on curriculum advisory committees, thus providing a valuable function. In his article, Fuller (1988:54) concurs suggesting that alumni can complement the "mission and curriculum" of the college. Kerns also comments that alumni could be quite valuable at career day gatherings. Like Bender, cited earlier, Kerns (1986:8) also sees fund raising as an alumni group function:

> Developing strong alumni networks should enhance fund raising instruments such as the annual fund-drive. This fund raising instrument relies on continuous broad-based support.

At this point, there appeared to be several functions that a two-year college alumni group could perform. Restated, they were the following:

1. It was one good form of external public relations for the institution.
2. Alumni could be helpful in various forms of fund raising.
3. It could help an institution maintain current address and phone data, thus making follow-up studies a bit easier.
4. Alumni could provide a scholarship or scholarships for incoming students.
5. Alumni could provide volunteer help when needed - example - political contacts on legislation.
6. They could serve a valuable function as advisors on curriculum committees.
7. They could act as resource people on career days.

Of these seven, numbers two and four deserved some final attention. While a newly formed alumni group would be wise to avoid the "dollars" issue until a stable organization developed, financial contributions could eventually become a goal. Such contributions could possibly become a piece (probably a small one) of the two-year college funding puzzle for the years ahead. Wattenbarger (1988:279) indicates that those years will require careful budgeting: "The financing of community colleges will require the best use of available resources in a none-too-perfect political milieu."

Since alumni groups in two-year colleges were relative newcomers to the scene, there appeared to be no absolute

methods of insuring success. However, those having had at least some experience did offer helpful advice. Like most programs and activities, an alumni organization would certainly need the support of the college president, as has been the case at MCC. In a similar vein, Fuller (1988:54) comments that "support from the board of trustees and the administration is essential." Also, a staff writer for the ERIC Clearinghouse for Jr. and Community Colleges (1984:2) emphasizes that a staff person must be assigned to coordinate "alumni affairs." This assignment was made at MCC. Once this person received the job assignment, their task was to develop a workable definition of the term "alumni."

Definition was a task about which hasty assumptions could be made and therefore very deceptive. At an American Association of Community and Junior College (AACJC) conference, one panel respondent, Ten Hoeve, suggests the lack of ease in making a good definition:

> After arguing for a month we finally made an arbitrary decision that no one will be excluded. We made a decision that we would focus our interests on and declare an alumnus to be anyone who either had been at the institution one full semester or had completed the equivalent of twelve hours of work, either in credit or non-credit components (McCracken et al., 1980:4).

This was very similar to the current practice at MCC. Initially, only those whose names appeared on past graduation bulletins were defined as alumni; however, the definition soon broadened to include anyone who was interested in and supportive of MCC. Hence, the mailing

list was expanded to include "Alumni and Friends." When considering the "community" nature of two-year colleges, probably the broader the definition of "alumni," the better.

Once the mailing list was organized, a job that Fuller (1988:52) highlights, the next task for a staff person usually would be to produce some type of publication. Bender (1988:3-4) lists the alumni newsletter as being number one priority in terms of building an effective group, saying that "it supports respondents' public relations priority." With the mailing of the first alumni newsletter at MCC, special pains were taken to insure quality of content and appearance. After the content was carefully screened and edited by four different readers, the MCC newsletter was printed on quality bond paper by a professional (local) printer. Those connected with the project were pleased with the results.

Thus, having secured the president's support, assigned one person to guide alumni affairs, and developed a newsletter, several major guideposts in the creation on an effective alumni organization would be in place. Having these in place, the staff person in charge would then normally have to make some program decisions. If the alumni group had formally organized with officers, such officers would very much need to be a part of the goal-setting and decision making. If not, the staff person would probably want to establish a steering committee,

composed of the president, the staff person, a student services administrator, and two or three energetic alumni. This group would then need to make decisions about the scope of programming. For example, whether the alumni newsletter was intended to be the only activity could be a point of discussion.

Alumni associations which had programs that actively involved members appeared to be more dynamic and effective. In order to generate interest, Bender and others (1988:6) urge anyone forming such an organization to discover what the alumni wanted to do.

In addition to Bender cited previously, writers of three early but often cited articles, Rock (1979), Kopecek (1980), and Trent (1981), provide some critical insight about three general groupings of activities in which alumni can become involved. The first of these could be termed a "social event" kind of grouping. Rock (1979:119) lists events like travel tours, alumni reunions, and alumni awards. Bender and others (1988:3) mention "pre-functions to college sponsored events." Generally, these kinds of gatherings offer opportunities to socialize and have a good time.

The second grouping, "productive" or "functional" activities, involve some socializing but also are viewed as being purposeful. That is, alumni were to be accomplishing some type of goal. Kopecek (1980:4) lists serving on "professional or programmatic advisory committees" and

"professional involvement with faculty through seminars and workshops" as being alumni functions. Other productive alumni activities, mentioned earlier in this document, involved serving on curriculum advisory councils, raising funds, generating scholarships, lobbying on behalf of the college, and serving as resource people on career days. A final purposeful activity that Luskin and Warren (1985:78) mention is for alumni to organize, elect officers, and provide help with association affairs.

"Fringe benefits" was a third area capable of attracting alumni interest. Trent (1981:26) comments that "providing the alumni with preferential access to such facilities as the library and athletic areas will motivate interest and support." Rock (1979:119) lists "special ticket prices" at college events as an additional benefit. Also, these same writers state that one of their institutions has tutoring services available free to students whose parents were alumni. Finally, Kopecek (1980:4) indicates the use of "tailored literature and publications concerning their program and/or profession" which would presumably have been above and beyond the regular newsletter. All of these represented items which fell quite easily under a "fringe benefits of alumni" heading, their purpose being to maintain active alumni interest.

It has been suggested in this literature review that alumni associations in two-year colleges have been a

relatively new development, appearing only within the past fifteen to twenty years. One reason for this concerned the fairly recent establishment of many two-year colleges; it has taken some time in many institutions for a pool of alumni to develop. A second reason for the lack of attention was that community colleges more recently began to encounter serious budget restraints. Thus, many administrators were beginning to examine ways of supplementing waning funds. Third, as mentioned early on, administration and faculty in two year colleges have felt the need to establish stronger ties to their communities and service areas. Alumni associations can provide an effective public relations mechanism.

As detailed herein, alumni groups have served a variety of functions including volunteer work, supplemental funding, providing scholarships, lobbying, and participating in career days. Alumni groups which were functioning well often reflected these characteristics:

1. They had the support of the college president.
2. A staff member had been assigned to develop the organization.
3. An operational definition of alumni had been accomplished.
4. A data base of names and mailing addresses had been developed.
5. A quality newsletter was being sent to alumni.
6. The alumni had been surveyed to determine what

activities they would enjoy and pursue.

7. Active alumni groups often had social events and occasions where something productive was done.
8. Some alumni groups received fringe benefits.

As indicated in this review, the development of an alumni association requires a good deal of time and patience. To maintain a current name and address file represents a sizeable amount of time, not to mention the preparation of a newsletter and other activities outlined herein. However, the improved lines of communication, the enhanced public relations, and the potential to generate additional financial support make the development of a two-year college alumni association worthwhile.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Problem Solving Methodology

This study involved the methodology of assessment and then evaluation based upon the results of the assessment. The study began with an extended search of literature which provided a conceptual framework for the study. Several administrators were consulted during the questionnaire development process to assure a valid and reliable tool for collection of data. After the survey questionnaire was developed, the President of MCC, the Director of Alumni Affairs and the Administrative Assistant (editor) validated and attested to the reliability of the questionnaire.

A random sample of 200 MCC alumni was determined by taking every tenth name from an alphabetical listing of 2000 MCC alumni. This method of random selection was one deemed appropriate by Isaac and Michael (1981:190) in their text on research methodology. Names of alumni thus selected were recorded, and these alumni received a transmittal letter, questionnaire (see Appendices A and B), and a stamped return envelope. Also, phone calls were made to help insure a 65 percent response rate which allowed maximum generalizations to be made. (Note: The phone calls were an added but necessary procedure.)

Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and were reported in narrative and tabular format. Upon the completion of this practicum, a report of the results was given to the MCC President, the Director of Alumni Affairs, the Dean of Institutional Outreach, and the Mid-Plains Area President.

Definition of Terms

As discussed in the literature review, the term alumnus was and is quite difficult to define in the context of the two-year college. The trend appeared to be one of accepting a broader definition, including under the "alumnus" several, or all of the following: degree recipients, certificate recipients, completed one semester of study, completed two semesters of study, completed course work at the institution, and a strong friend of the institution. The broader definition applied to the alumni function at MCC; however, many on the mailing lists at the time of this writing held an associate's degree.

Assumptions

There were several assumptions made in conjunction with this study. First, it was assumed that the responses of a random sample of two hundred alumni would be representative of the entire population. Furthermore, it was assumed that a 65 percent response rate of the group sampled would provide an adequate information base. For the purpose of data analysis, it was assumed that alumni who marked "interested" and "somewhat interested" could be viewed as a group that would be willing to

participate or contribute to certain activities, processes, or events. Any topic receiving at least sixty-five responses (when combining "interested" and "somewhat interested") was assumed to be significant since this would represent 50 percent (rounded to the nearest percent) of the total. It was also assumed that headings and sub-headings on the survey instrument would be reasonably clear and understandable to survey respondents. Finally, it was assumed the results of this study would have only local application.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations inherent in this study. First, the random sample of two hundred alumni may not have been representative of the population. Second, a 65 percent response rate of those sampled may not have provided an accurate and adequate information base. Third, combined responses of respondents who marked "interested" and "somewhat interested" may not have indicated a homogeneous grouping in terms of willingness to participate or take action. Fourth, heading and sub-headings on the survey instrument might not have been entirely clear to survey respondents. Fifth, the assessment outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations are not intended to be generalized for application at other two-year, post-secondary institutions. Sixth, actual implementation of practicum recommendations may be limited by budget considerations or lack of staff.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The literature review was completed and organized around three concepts: 1) information about the recent development of alumni affairs in community colleges; 2) functions being performed by alumni staff and officers; and 3) the characteristics of effective alumni systems. The survey of literature contained information necessary for the creation of the survey instrument.

The survey instrument was mailed to a random sample of 200 MCC alumni. Of the 200 alumni, 131 responded which generated a response rate of 65.5 percent.

What follows is a description of how the 131 alumni responded to various items on the instrument. The description is divided into two sections: 1) a narrative section that contains four general questions and alumni responses to those questions; and 2) a section containing three tables which depict alumni responses to questions asked under the survey headings "Social," "Productive - Functional Activities," and "Fringe Benefits for Alumni."

The first general question asked was "Should there be a formal MCC alumni organization with elected officers?" Eighty-seven alumni representing 66.4 percent of the total responded "Yes." The "No" response was marked by thirty-one alumni which represented 23.7 percent of the total.

Of the 131 alumni, thirteen, representing 9.9 percent, did not respond to this question.

Question two was as follows: "Should there be an annual alumni social event?" Of the 131 who returned surveys, ninety-two alumni representing 70.2 percent of the total responded "Yes." The "No" option received twenty-seven markings representing 20.6 percent of the total. Alumni who did not respond to either the "Yes" or "No" option numbered twelve, representing 9.2 percent of the total.

The third question was stated: "Did you receive the first MCC alumni newsletter mailed in spring 1990?" Eighty-seven alumni checked "Yes" which represented 66.4 percent of the total. The "No" option received forty-three checks, representing 32.8 percent of the responses. Of the 131 who returned surveys, one person failed to mark the third question which was .8 of a percent.

Question four was as follows: "How would you rate the newsletter?" Seventeen alumni, representing 19.5 percent of the total, rated the newsletter as being "Excellent." Fifty-eight alumni, representing 66.7 percent of the total, rated the newsletter as "Good." Nine alumni rated the newsletter as "Average" which represented 10.3 percent of the total responses. No alumni marked "Poor," and three alumni, representing 3.4 percent of the total, failed to mark any response to question four.

What follows is a series of three tables which depict the results of three categories of assessment which, as of yet, have not been discussed. In each table, there is the number and percentage of alumni who responded either I (interested), S (somewhat interested), or N (not interested) for each topical area. Each topic appears in ranked order with the topic receiving the highest sum total below it and so on. The number of respondents in each horizontal series (I S N) equals 131, and the percentage equals 100.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Responses to Social Activities Category

Topic	Interested		Somewhat interested		Not interested		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Reunions	53	40.5	44	33.6	27	20.6	7	5.3
2. Alumni night with college events	47	35.9	47	35.9	29	22.1	8	6.1
3. Travel/tours	19	14.5	46	35.1	56	42.7	10	7.6
4. Alumni awards	21	16.0	41	31.3	57	43.5	12	9.2
5. PTK alumni gathering	17	13.0	37	28.2	58	44.3	19	14.5
6. Alumni band	9	6.9	16	12.2	95	72.5	11	8.4

Table 1 contains data which permits (when I and S percentages are combined for each topic) the topics to be ranked from first place (highest combined percentage) through sixth place (lowest combined percentage). Under the general heading of "Social," the survey sub-topics received the following ranking and percentages: 1) reunions - first place at 74.1 percent; 2) alumni night with college events - second place at 71.8 percent; 3) travel/tours - third place at 49.6 percent; 4) alumni awards - fourth place at 47.3 percent; 5) Phi-Theta Kappa alumni gathering - fifth place at 41.2 percent; and 6) alumni band - sixth place at 19.1 percent.

Table 2 depicts data regarding the topic "Productive Functional Activities." Again, there are six subtopics involved, and the topics are ranked from first place (highest combined I and S percentage). The survey subtopics received the following ranking and percentages: 1) encouraging potential students to attend MCC - first rank at 81.7 percent; 2) funding an alumni scholarship - second rank at 67.1 percent; 3) serving as a career day resource person - third rank at 51.9 percent; 4) lobbying on behalf of the college - fourth rank at 46.6 percent; 5) serving on a curriculum advisory council - fifth rank at 45 percent; and 6) serving as an alumni officer or committee member - sixth rank at 35.9 percent.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Responses
to Productive Activities
Category

Topic	Interested		Somewhat interested		Not interested		No response	
1. Encouraging potential students to attend MCC	63	48.1	44	33.6	18	13.7	6	4.6
2. Funding an alumni scholarship	40	30.5	48	36.6	33	25.2	10	7.6
3. Serving as Career Day resource person	31	23.7	37	28.2	54	41.2	9	6.9
4. Lobbying on behalf of the College	17	13.0	44	33.6	60	45.8	10	7.6
5. Serving on a Curriculum Advisory Council	22	16.8	37	28.2	63	48.1	9	6.9
6. Serving as an Alumni Officer/ Committee Member	11	8.4	36	27.5	73	55.7	11	8.4

Table 3 contains data for the survey topic "Fringe Benefits for Alumni." Under this topic, there were four sub-topics, and these sub-topics were ranked from first (highest combined I and S percentages) to fourth (lowest combined I and S percentages). The survey subtopics received the following ranking and percentages: 1) library services - first rank at 72.5 percent; 2) receive copies of "The Indian" newspaper - second rank at 70.2 percent; 3) special alumni rates for college events - third rank at

69.5 percent; 4) computer lab usage (when available) - fourth rank at 65.7 percent.

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Responses to Fringe Benefits Category

Topic	Interested		Somewhat interested		Not interested		No response	
1. Library services	68	51.9	27	20.6	28	21.4	8	6.1
2. Receive copies of "The Indian"	65	49.6	27	20.6	35	26.7	4	3.1
3. Special alumni rates for college events	60	45.8	31	23.7	31	23.7	9	6.9
4. Computer lab (when available)	52	39.7	34	26.0	33	25.2	12	9.2

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The results of this practicum were related to the purpose which was to assess the need for development of the MCC alumni group. Through a methodical process of surveying a random sample of 200 MCC alumni, the question of how the MCC alumni organization should be developed was, for the most part, answered. Respondents' answers to the three activity categories (Social, Productive, Fringe Benefits) and related subtopics indicated a somewhat more specific sense of direction for several separate but related areas. It is to be noted, however, that any conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from the assessment results must be tempered by the assumptions and limitations cited earlier in this document.

The literature review was related to the purpose of this study in at least four ways. First, it was established through the literature review that alumni association development in two-year post-secondary institutions was occurring. However, it was a fairly recent type of process, having begun only within the past ten or fifteen years.

Second, the literature was of value because it contained information about what functions alumni groups perform in two-year colleges. Several of these functions mentioned in the literature review eventually were incorporated into the survey document.

A third significant area in the literature review involved a working definition of the term "alumnus." It appeared that a number of institutions accepted a broad definition of the term which included but was not limited to individuals who had received degrees, certificates, had attended for a semester or more, or were simply strong supporters of the institution. This broader definition was the one utilized for alumni operations at MCC.

A final area of the literature review contained information about characteristics of successful alumni organizations at two-year colleges. Again, some of these characteristics were incorporated into the framework of the survey questionnaire.

Conclusions

Three broad conclusions were formed from the first four survey questions. The first conclusion was derived from question one which involved the need for a formal MCC alumni organization. Since nearly a two-thirds majority of respondents marked "yes," it was concluded there was support to establish such an organization.

The second question concerned whether or not there should be an annual alumni social event. The conclusion

drawn was that there should be such an event since more than two-thirds of the respondents favored such an activity.

Questions three and four involved the general topic of the alumni newsletter. Since a majority of the respondents rated the newsletter as being either "excellent" or "good," it appeared to be well-received as a communication device.

Respondents' answers to the three activity categories (Social, Productive, Fringe-Benefits) provided the basis for more specific kinds of conclusions. Such conclusions were then helpful in determining particular avenues of development for the MCC alumni organization.

Under the first heading "Social," the topic "reunions" received a combined "somewhat interested" and "interested" percentage of 74.1 percent. Based on the strength of this response, it was concluded that there was support for reunion activities. The topic "alumni night with college events" also received a strong supportive response. It appeared that alumni would participate in an alumni night activity. One other topic in this grouping "travel and tours" received nearly fifty percent of the markings. It was concluded that there was at least some interest in this area. All remaining topics under the heading "Social" received a less than fifty percent combined "S" and "I" response rate.

The second area, "Productive - Functional Activities," contained three topics which received better than a fifty

percent (combined S and I) response rate. Of the three topics, "Encouraging potential students to attend MCC," received the highest favorable percentage response rate. It was thus concluded that alumni were very willing to encourage potential students to attend MCC. A second topic, "Funding an alumni scholarship," was favorably marked by over two-thirds of those who responded. Alumni appeared to support the concept of some type of scholarship funding. Finally, "Serving as career day resource person" was favorably supported by slightly over one-half of the respondents. It was concluded that at least some alumni who were in the region would be willing to serve as a career day resource person. The remaining topics under the heading "Productive - Functional Activities" received less than fifty percent favorable response rate. However, there did appear to be limited support for lobbying on behalf of the college and serving on a curriculum advisory council.

All topics under "Fringe Benefits," the third major heading, received more than fifty percent combined "S" and "I" survey responses. Library services received the strongest response, followed by receiving copies of the college newspaper, special alumni rates for college events, and use of the computer lab when available. Alumni appeared to respond well to the possibility of receiving such benefits.

Implications

A number of implications became apparent upon careful consideration of the conclusions. First, there appeared to be sufficient support for some type of formal alumni organization at MCC which might create and promote at least one annual alumni social event. Respondents also seemed pleased with the MCC alumni newsletter. This response would imply that it should be continued as a communication device.

Responses to topics under the headings "Social," "Productive," and "Fringe-Benefits" also had helpful implications. For example, under the "Social" heading alumni responded to "reunions" very favorably, thus suggesting the need for the development of such a gathering or gatherings. Responses to two other topics, "alumni night with college events" and "travel and tours," were very favorable. The alumni night with a college event could be organized on the night of Homecoming or perhaps another appropriate evening. While alumni displayed some interest in the travel and tours topic, more survey work and assessment needed to be done to determine how such an activity might be carried out.

Alumni responded very favorably to three topics listed under the heading "Productive - Functional Activities." It appeared that alumni were very willing to encourage potential students to attend MCC. The implication here was that alumni should be encouraged to help in this manner.

Alumni also responded favorably to the notion of establishing a scholarship or scholarships. In times of tight budgets, this form of alumni support should be cultivated. Alumni also expressed a willingness to serve as career day resource people. The business and vocational instructors needed to be informed of this willingness to serve on the part of alumni.

All topics under the "Fringe Benefits" heading received favorable responses from alumni. Several benefits could be provided to alumni with little additional expense to the college such as use of the computer lab and giving alumni special rates for college events. Administrators would need to consider the costs involved in mailing copies of the college newspaper and providing library services.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made as a direct result of this practicum:

1. After the Director of Alumni Affairs, the Mid-Plains Area President, the President of MCC, and the Dean of Institutional Outreach review the results of this study, it is recommended that a summary of major findings be included in the next alumni newsletter.
2. It is recommended that the Director of Alumni Affairs establish a steering committee (composed of Director of Alumni, alumni, faculty, and

administration) to guide the development of a formal alumni organization at MCC.

3. Once this steering committee is established, it is recommended that the committee give serious consideration regarding:
    a. the creation of at least an annual alumni reunion event;
    b. the designation of an alumni night at an appropriate college event;
    c. further exploration of alumni tour and travel possibilities;
    d. exploration of ways to help alumni encourage potential students to attend MCC;
    e. the creation of an alumni scholarship or scholarships; and
    f. the use of alumni as career day resource people.
4. It is further recommended that the steering committee examine the feasibility of providing MCC alumni with fringe benefits including but not limited to:
    a. use of the computer lab (when available);
    b. library services;
    c. receiving the college newspaper; and
    d. receiving reduced rates at college events.

Having assessed these fringe benefits, it is recommended the committee direct their decision regarding which ones are feasible to the MCC President for administrative action.

5. It is recommended that the MCC alumni newsletter continue to be used as a major communication device.

6. Finally, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted at other two-year post-secondary institutions. Only a few studies of this nature have been done recently.

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APPENDIX A

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

August, 1990

Dear MCC Alumnus:

The administration at MCC is in the process of establishing a data base of alumni names, addresses, and phone numbers. This spring, a mailing of the first MCC alumni newsletter occurred.

The newsletter is one kind of service that can be provided. Administrators working with MCC's alumni program want to determine if other alumni functions and services should be developed.

Would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope by _____. We have included a package of coffee so that you may enjoy a cup on us as you complete the survey.

Thank you for your time and prompt response.

Sincerely,

Ford M. Craig
Administrative Assistant
English and Education Instructor
McCook Community College

Enclosure

[illegible] EAST THIRD STREET McCOOK NEBRASKA 69001 - PHONE 308/345-6303

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire
Survey to Assist in Alumni Association Development
at McCook Community College

I. Should there be a formal MCC alumni organization with elected officers?
( ) Yes
( ) No

II. Should there be an annual alumni social event?
( ) Yes
( ) No

III. Did you receive the first MCC alumni newsletter mailed in spring 1990?
( ) Yes
( ) No

IV. How would you rate the newsletter? (check one)
( ) Excellent
( ) Good
( ) Average
( ) Poor

V. What activities would you as an alumnus or friend of MCC support? Please circle one response per item.
I= interested S= somewhat interested N= not interested

A. Social

1.	Reunions	I	S	N
2.	Travel/tours	I	S	N
3.	Alumni night with college events	I	S	N
4.	Alumni band	I	S	N
5.	PTK Alumni gathering	I	S	N
6.	Alumni awards	I	S	N

B. Productive - Functional Activities

1. Funding an alumni scholarship	I	S	N
2. Serving as career day resource person	I	S	N
3. Serving on a curriculum advisory council	I	S	N
4. Lobbying on behalf of the college	I	S	N
5. Serving as an alumni officer or committee member	I	S	N
6. Encouraging potential students to attend MCC	I	S	N

C. Fringe Benefits for Alumni

1. Library services	I	S	N
2. Computer lab (when available)	I	S	N
3. Special alumni rates for college events			
4. Receive copies of "The Indian" (college newspaper)	I	S	N

Please return survey to:

Ford M. Craig
Administrative Assistant
McCook Community College
1205 East 3rd Street
McCook, NE 69001

ERIC Clearinghouse for
Junior Colleges

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